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marked off by tradition is not, as a rule, identified with the first chief and founder of the village. It is mostly the second in the line of chiefs whom tradition associates with the ancestor-king of Nupe. Thus Lefiya, the first chief of Doko, is said to have been succeeded by a certain Dibo Saba upon whom Tsoede conferred insignia and chiefly magic. Or in Pichi tradition has it that a certain Dikwa founded the village and assumed chieftainship first, and that it was his successor, Goga, who was invested by Tsoede with the emblems of rulership. This mythological feature is of great significance, for it proclaims, projected in the manner of myths into the dim past, two facts in which we shall discover the very essence of village society: the fact that the village is conceived of as possessing a social identity of its own, and at the same time the fact that it depends for its continuous existence on the sanction of king and kingdom of Nupe.

We notice also another interesting fact, namely, that while normally Nupe families cannot trace their ancestry back more than three or four generations, these chieftain families proudly record a long list of ancestors, embracing ten or more generations. The explanation lies, again, in the political significance of this link with the past which, like the mythology that surrounds it, endorses the existing political constellation. In the case of ordinary kinship groups the genealogy has no significance beyond that of establishing, rather vaguely, present relationships; in the case of (hereditary) chieftainship it is to establish a convincing—and unique—pedigree for political claims.

THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The chief rules over his community assisted by the village elders, the *nûsaźi* or Old Ones, or, as they are also called, the *ticiźi*, the Titled Ones. They are the heads of families or of groups of families which live together in one compound or one *efu*. Their appointment to the position of an elder is expressed in the titles which the chief confers upon these members of his council. The office of the elders is only very loosely specialized. Certain titles reflect the special occupations which *nûsaźi* and their families follow—titles of hunters, drummers, blacksmiths. When the community is in need of the services of these professions—for the purpose of organizing a large-scale hunt or of preparing a ceremony at which the village drummers are to perform—it will secure them through the elders who represent the profession on the village council. Sometimes a religious office is combined with a political rank. But more frequently the important priestly offices, for example the priesthood of the *gunnu*, the main cult of Nupe, although bestowed on family heads, are not connected with a political position. The holder of this religious office has no seat or voice in the village council except when questions of ritual—his ritual—are discussed. Apart from these more specialized offices the rank of the *nûsa* is exactly what the name implies: the rank of a man whose age and experience and the headship over a large family entitle him to assume an active part in guiding the fate of his community.

Titles and composition of the council of elders vary, but the same rule is valid in every Nupe village: so many 'houses' or family groups, so

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623 many elders. No 'house' may be excluded from the share-out of village offices, nor may one 'house' 'own' more than one title—at least not in theory. The senior members of the house sometimes accompany their family head to the meetings of the council in the chief's house. Or if an elder is himself too old, or an invalid, a younger relative may do his work for him; but there would not as a rule be two holders of a *nũsa* rank in the same house.[1] These rules, however, are not, in fact cannot be, rigid. A powerful chief may appoint a friend or favourite to a rank to which he would not normally be entitled, or refuse a rank to the legitimate claimant for reasons of private enmity or jealousy; an immigrant group may demand that a rank be conferred on its head as a confirmation of established citizenship; or an expanding family may claim additional titles for its members. New ranks may thus be created, new titles introduced, which do not correspond to the traditional system of village ranks.[2] On the other hand, titles may disappear with the family in which they were vested or with the special profession to which they referred. The title *Ndace*, Father of Hunting, originally a title common everywhere in Nupe, is missing to-day in many villages; the titles *Etsu Dzã*, Head of the Drummers, and *Majĩ Tswata*, Master of the Blacksmiths, have disappeared here and there where strangers (Hausa) have taken over the work of drumming and smithing and have disorganized this originally family-owned profession.

The equation: so many houses, so many titles, may also be upset (at least temporarily) by the opposite trend: in an expanding family group sections may split off from the main body, and build themselves a new house, without being awarded a separate rank. The *tunga* very rarely 'owns' a *nũsa* rank. Founded by young people, it usually keeps its status of a 'junior branch' even in subsequent generations. However, a son or younger brother may be called to succeed the family head in the village and leave the *tunga* to assume his inheritance and position in the 'town'.[3]

623 554 Thus the institution of ranks of elders has two aspects: one is the official recognition, by the community at large, of the headship of certain individuals over the component groups of the community—kinship groups and 'houses'—a headship which implies both a certain moral control and control of the economic resources of the group; and the other the division of the political executive of the village between a number of selected individuals. The closer examination of the first aspect belongs to the chapters on kinship, land-tenure, and economics. We are concerned here more especially with the second aspect. But we shall see that the two are closely intertwined. The acceptance of a family head into the village executive enhances the position of authority which he normally occupies in his kinship group; but it signifies at the same time that he may be called upon to use this moral authority in the service of the village at large. Appointment to a village rank also strengthens the measure of

[1] Thus an old, blind *nũsa* in Jebba no longer took part in the meetings of the village elders. But no successor was appointed until his death.

[2] In Mokwa, for example, the new title *Majĩ Kethagba* (lit. Master of Grave Digging) was conferred on the head of a Hausa family which had settled there during the Fulani wars.

[3] See p. 37.

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economic control which he exercises, by granting him access to special economic resources (above all, fruit-bearing trees) unattainable to the other members of his group. Thus supported, the titled family head is qualified to assume his double role, as official agent of the community at large and as representative of his group *vis-à-vis* the village community.

The relation between the two roles and their relative preponderance varies with the rank which an elder may attain. For the *nũsa* ranks are not of equal order. They are defined by strict order of precedence, and there is never any doubt which title ranks higher or lower. The measure of political responsibility closely corresponds to the place in the scale of village ranks. In some villages we even find a formal distinction between the 'great' and 'small' ranks, the former three or (more often) four in number, forming as it were the 'inner council'. Where the village is arranged in a number of separate large clusters of compounds (as in Doko, Kutigi, or Sakpe), the distinction between 'great' and 'small' ranks also implies a distinction between headship over the whole cluster of compounds, the *efu*, and headship over single compounds or 'houses' only.[1] The professional ranks of blacksmiths and drummers are always at the bottom of the list of village ranks. The political importance of the rank of the Head of the Hunters and of the ranks which are combined with priestly offices differs in different communities.

It would be wrong to think of the village council of elders as of an elaborate, rigidly formalized, instrument of government. The full council is rarely summoned except on important occasions, such as the election of a chief, or the visit of the *Etsu* and his delegates or the District Officer. The normal routine work of village government is carried on by the chief and his 'inner council' of two or three elders of highest rank. And here again we have no formal appointed assembly, but rather casual meetings in the houses of the chief or of one of the elders, at which current questions are discussed and the necessary decisions taken. If more elders have to be consulted or instructed, a messenger will be sent to their houses, or they will call individually at the house of the chief or the head *nũsa*. If in the case of the *nũsaži* of high rank their position of authority transcends the component groups to the headship of which they have risen in virtue of their kinship position, this latter aspect preponderates in the case of the *nũsaži* of lesser rank who are excluded from the 'inner council'. They are executive organs of the village in the indirect sense of intermediaries through whom decisions of the chief and the leading elders reach the various kinship and local groups, and through whom, in turn, these groups can voice claims and interests so far as they call for action on the part of the community.

The graded scale of village ranks does not command an unequivocal corresponding system of appointment and succession. Succession to the lowest, professional, ranks is invariably hereditary. So is succession to the priestly ranks or the ranks linked with a priestly office: the secret

[1] In eastern Nupe, especially among Dibo and Beni, the number four plays an important part in the arrangement of *efu* as well as in the order of ranks. We find four *efu* and four ranks, or four head ranks and four secondary ranks, or four ranks plus the chief's rank.

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of the ritual office remains vested in one family group. But succession to the other ranks involves a certain ambiguous situation. Only a few communities have worked out the principle of precedence consistently, evolving a system of promotion from lower to higher rank—Jebba Island and Mokwa are examples.[1] In these communities every vacancy is made an occasion for a reshuffle of the ranks. A *nūsa* whose seniority and standing qualify him for the rank that has fallen vacant is appointed, his own rank going to another *nūsa* deserving promotion, and so forth, till finally one of the lowest ranks becomes vacant, which is then duly bestowed on a fitting, as yet untitled, candidate. But in other communities all promotion from one rank to another is excluded, the titles in almost caste-like rigidity remain linked with 'houses', and a man can claim only this one title whether or not it is one for which his age, experience, and personality would qualify him.[2] The people are themselves well aware of this ambiguity. It is overcome, in practice, in various ways. First, the appointment to the rank which has fallen vacant may be postponed till the candidate has reached the age and gained the status appropriate to the rank; a 'young man' of Kutigi (he was about 45) had been waiting for ten years for the title which his father's brother had held before and which had been 'reserved' for him; every time I saw him and asked how his affair stood, he replied with the same words: *n'wa ke degi*, 'just a little longer'. Or one may introduce new titles, intermediary ranks, by which device the rigid order of traditional ranks is circumvented. Finally, hereditary succession in Nupe is never understood in the narrow sense of a quasi-automatic appointment. Often it is a selection from a number of candidates of suitable seniority—younger brothers or eldest sons (in the classificatory sense) of the deceased. Though seniority counts above all, old age and debility will disable a prospective successor to family headship. Apart from seniority, other attributes are also essential: good reputation, skill and experience as farmer, a friendly temper, and good health; a leper or a man suffering from elephantiasis or blindness is ineligible; so is a complete invalid. But so long as his impediment (e.g. a short leg, a crooked arm) does not interfere with his work on the land and his ability to move about, it does not matter. The main attribute is *ánkali*—intelligence. In Kutigi a serious quarrel had broken out between the chief and some of his elders who refused to give their consent to the appointment to a high rank of a man whom they considered 'to have no brains'.

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The following genealogy illustrates the succession to the position of a certain titled family head, the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa. We

[1] An interesting transition from hereditary ranks to ranks of the promotion type has evolved in Faẓe, a village in Ebe country. Only recently the former system of hereditary ranks was replaced in this village by a promotion system, the depopulation of the village in the Fulani wars having made this step necessary; for some of the families in which the most important ranks had been vested had died out, and only promotion from lower to higher ranks could prevent this untoward vacancy. This local development cannot, for various reasons, be taken as affording the explanation of the origin of the promotion system of *nūsa* ranks in Nupe. But it clearly shows that the people are aware of the inherent conflict between the rank system based on precedence and the strict rule of hereditary succession.

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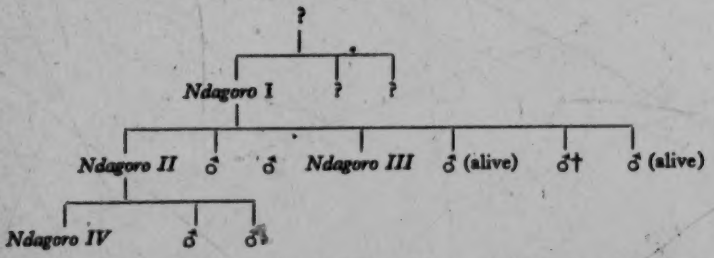
observe the general scheme of Nupe inheritance, one generation being run through before the next generation is admitted to the succession; but we notice also that the progress of succession left out two men of the older generation.

Genealogy of the *Ndagoro* of Mokwa



The same qualifications would also make a stranger who has settled for some time in a Nupe village eligible for a higher or lower *nūsa* rank. But 'good reputation' would be understood according to local standards, which may not be the standards of the applicant. A lute-player in Doko, who had been living there for some twenty years, a fairly prosperous and well-liked man, still went without title. Lute-playing, though appreciated in Bida, was not in the eyes of the villagers a respectable profession. Had he been a farmer, or even a drummer, he would have been awarded a title long before.

If a 'new man' desires to be granted a title he broaches the subject first with one of the titled *nūsa* with whom he is intimate; the latter will bring it before chief and council of elders, who will then discuss the question at their leisure. If, on the other hand, a rank falls vacant, especially one of the higher ranks, the official discussions will start at once, and all the men of the village will be talking about it and surmising likely successors. In the lowest ranks succession is a simple matter. In hereditary ranks, particularly in small families, the decision may also take but little time. When the *Ejukó* of Jebba Island—the hereditary Keeper of the Chain of Tsoede—died, his successor was known a week after his death, and the title was conferred upon him within a month. But sometimes the appointment of a successor is a serious and long-drawn-out business, and often enough, as we have seen, feuds may break out over the appointment of the most suitable candidate. Discussion follows discussion, often for weeks and months, especially if it happens to be the rainy season when everybody is busy and can spare only an evening or two in the week. The elders meet first, in small groups, in their own houses; later when the discussion has reached a more advanced stage they meet in the house of the *nūsa* of highest rank and finally in the house of the chief. As always in meetings of this kind the assembly gathers in the entrance hut of the house; the younger men sit near the outer door, the elder men on the inner side of the hut. They are rarely given anything to eat or drink except perhaps a few kola-nuts in the house of the chief.

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623 The meetings (which I have had many opportunities of attending) are quiet and dignified, the discussion flows slowly, no loud word is spoken; the young men are mostly silent, only the elder ones take part. If controversies or disagreements occur, they are never apparent in the discussion itself. Rather they reveal themselves in the disconcerting practice that what had seemed to be happily settled in one discussion will be questioned again in the next; and men whose agreement seemed to be successfully secured to-day will call another meeting of their own to-morrow or the next day and start the discussion all over again.

The appointment to a new rank is a matter of little ceremony. It is identical with the modest ceremonial that accompanies succession to the position of a family head (to be described in a later chapter) with which, in fact, it frequently coincides. Appointments to high *nūsa* ranks usually fall in the long period of mourning for the late holder of the rank, and so exclude any festivity or general celebration. Appointment to a new rank, which would mostly fall to a comparatively young man, is sometimes made the occasion of a little feasting: beer or palm-wine for the guests and a dance in the afternoon and evening to which neighbours, friends, and above all the comrades from the age-grade association are invited. But more often there is nothing; the selected candidate would be summoned to the chief's house before the assembled council of elders, and would be informed that *nu'a gi Tsowa*, 'he had been appointed (lit. had eaten) *Tsowa*', or some other such rank, and that is all. Only by the self-importance with which the new *nūsa* carries himself in the next few days or weeks will you be able to say that this had indeed been an important occasion. If by mistake you address him by his old title, he—or others who know—will put you right at once.

623 609 123 Perhaps I should mention that I have myself gone through this experience when the people of Jebba Island decided to bestow a rank on me, who had become in their eyes a 'full Nupe', and who at any rate was insisting on being treated as one when it came to religious meetings or confidential discussions of village matters. I had to make a few small presents (from which even a 'real' *nūsa*-candidate might not be exempted) to chief and elders; they were 'sitting' for three days, discussing the most suitable title, till eventually the senior *nūsa* informed me that I had been given the title *Shaba* (a very high rank but, needless to say, introduced *ad hoc*, and copied from the rank-list of other villages). A day or two [576] after my appointment I walked through the village and met some people who used the customary greeting for Europeans, *zaki*; but my companions called the people sharply to order, informing them that I was *Shaba* of Jebba now, which information at once elicited the greeting corresponding to the *Shaba* rank, *gbako nyenkpa* (body of iron). In a week or two there was nobody within ten miles of the place who did not know of my new rank.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

622 184 Chieftainship in Nupe is, like the system of *nūsa* ranks, characterized by the coexistence of two systems of succession: promotion and hereditary succession. In Jebba and Mokwa the chief's rank is merely the

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I

Rank System from Mokwa (Promotion Type)

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Rank order	Title	Office	Locality ('*efu*' or '*eni*')	Succession	Insignia, magic, &c.	Remarks
1	*Lile*	Chief	Efugbo or *efu* Lile	Promotion	..	Present chief was promoted to chieftainship from rank *Sarkin Zongu*
2	*Shaba Lile*	..	Gunnuba (so called because *gunnu* priest lives here)	,,	..	Title introduced under Fulani influence; replaced original title *Sojaki*.
3	*Ndeshi* (Sheshi)	'King-maker'	Ilancita	Hereditary	Sacred chain, priesthood of Tsoede	Title *Ndeshi* corresponds to *Ndeki*, 'Father of the Town'.
3a	*Guye*	Successor to 3	Etisheshi and Korofugi	Hereditary in family of *Ndeshi*[1]	..	..
3b	*Tswashe*	Successor to 3a	Ntaci	As 3a	..	..
4	*Sdmava*	..	Gbaye and Yafu	Promotion	..	Was promoted to present rank from *Tsoukwa*.
5	*Ndagoro*	..	Goro	,,	..	..
6	*Maji Koshegbe*	..	Kpege	,,	..	Newly introduced rank.
7	*Tsoukwa* (Tsowa)	..	*eni* Ndakogi	,,	..	..
8	*Maji Bagidi*	..	Ilancita	,,	..	..
9	*Maji Dende*	..	,,	,,	..	..
10	*Maji wya Kota*	..	Goro	,,	..	..
11	*Maji Guye*	..	Kpege	,,	..	..
12	*Maji Tswaci*	Head of Blacksmiths	Tswata	Hereditary	..	..
13	*Etsu Dzi*	Head of Drummers	*eni* Dzezi	,,	..	..
13a	*Shaba Dzi*	Successor to 13	*eni* Dzezi	Hereditary in house of *Etsu Dzi*[2]	..	..
•	*Wangwa*	..	*efu* Wangwa	..	..	This rank no longer exists. The position of the head of the *efu* has fallen, quasi-unofficially, to the *Limam*, the Mohammedan priest, who is not yet, however, officially admitted into the village council.

[1] These secondary ranks defining succession to the hereditary rank of 'king-maker' I have found only in Mokwa. The *Sheshi*, *Guye*, and *Tswashe* regard each other as elder and younger brothers respectively. I was told that originally the office of *Sheshi* was inherited matrilineally, and that this is the explanation why it has become divided between three kinship sections living in different *efu*. Though this explanation is, logically, incorrect, and although these three offices have actually been inherited in paternal line since the people can remember, the fact remains that the three groups which succeed each other in rotation are vaguely thought of as of matrilineal origin. The aloofness from the other village ranks which characterizes the office of the 'king-maker' is thus further enhanced by the different conception of succession.

[2] Secondary professional ranks of this kind are found also in other craftsmen groups, e.g. blacksmiths. Sometimes there exists also a third rank of this order, with the title *Kpoti*. This organization of craftsmen ranks will be discussed in Chapter XIV.

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II

Rank System from Doko (Hereditary Type)

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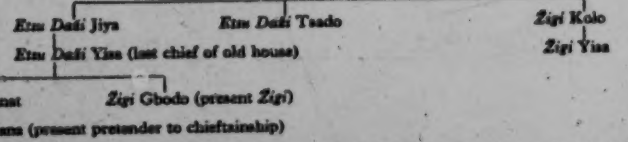
Rank order	*Title*	*Office*	*Locality ('efu')*	*Succession*	*Insigna, magic, &c.*	*Remarks*
1	*Etsu Dashi*	Chief	Dashi	Hereditary	Sacred bangles, chief's ritual	*Zigi* (priest) is of chief's family.[1]
2	*Shaba*	..	In *tunga*	A relation of chief, promoted to present rank from *Lile* at death of late *Shaba*, 1935	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida ranks.
3	*Lile*	Formerly 'Heir Presumptive'	Dashi	Present holder chief's younger brother	..	..
4	*Kpotsi*	..	,,	Present holder chief's elder brother (died 1936)	..	Newly introduced title, copied from Bida.
5	*Mahi*	..	,,	Tentatively introduced (see p. 56)	..	As 2 and 4
6	*Ndefie*	..	Edoko	Hereditary in one 'house'	..	..
7	*Dasho*	..	Takugi	,,	..	..
8	*Bobe*	..	Kpecinefu	,,	..	..
9	*Shabashi*	..	Ndadofu	,,	..	..
10	*Bodo*	..	Dashi	,,	..	..
11	*Zitsu Bobi*	..	Edoko	,,	..	..
12	*Maji*	..	,,	,,	..	..
13	*Maji Egba* (or *Ndace*)	Head of Hunters	,,	,,	..	..

[1] The typical relationship between *Zitsu* and *Zigi*, chief and priest of the chief's ritual, as described above exists no longer, as the present chief comes from a new family. The relationship between chief and priest as it existed in the original chief's dynasty is shown in the attached genealogy.



of this: a young man, son of the late chief, but inexperienced, timid and unintelligent, had been put forward as candidate by the 'king-maker', himself a shrewd and keen man, when the Administration looked for a successor to the vacant chieftainship of Sakpe. (The young chief, whose rule not unnaturally proved a failure, was deposed after two years.) But such cases are rare. As a rule the division of secular and priestly office works out harmoniously. Only once did I find an open conflict; but it revealed, not a failure of the established system, but rather a departure from it, brought about by extraneous influences.

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It was the case of the chiefs of Doko, to which I have already referred. Here the kinship bond between chief and priest, *Zitsu* and *Zigi*, had been dissolved when the new family succeeded to the chieftainship. The priest of the chief's ritual became, from the priestly partner in the two-fold office of chieftainship, an independent, and thus dangerous, agent. The descendant of the original chief's family, a young man, Ndakó Gana by name, used the spiritual power vested in his house as a weapon

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651 621 activity that exists in the village: common labour and communal ceremonies and sacrifices, fights and wars in pre-European times, and tax-collection for the modern Native Administration. Tax-collection in the village has become a little ritual of its own, interesting enough to be described here. Some time before the N.A. lorry is expected from Bida on its periodical tax-collecting visits you will find the chief sitting in his house, or in a booth in the market, surrounded by the people who have come to pay their tax. The two or three head *nūsaši* will sit with him. The 'tax Mallam', who is attached to the Village Head as scribe and 'accountant', makes entries in his little book and is busy writing out tax receipts. Little heaps of coins pile up before them. On this day the normal routine of village life is interrupted: the men do not go to their farms and often forgo their midday meal at home, and even a ceremony that might fall in that time will be postponed until the 'tax ritual' has been concluded.

621 A large proportion of co-operative village work is done to-day by the order of the N.A.: the repair of a rest-house, the clearing of a motor-road, &c. But the concerted action of the village community is still as efficient in spontaneous, unsolicited work. I have seen the men of a village repairing a bush bridge leading to their farms a day or two after the news that it had been swept away by floods was reported to the chief. [694] And although there exists to-day an efficient body of N.A. police, in an emergency it falls frequently enough to the people of a village to organize the pursuit of a criminal and to escort him to the District Head—a task which the young men at least undertake with efficiency and relish.

BALANCE OF POWER

622 To repeat: the village elders are the mouthpiece and the agents of the chief, through whom his orders reach the community; and they are also, ●623 in turn, the informants on whom the chief depends, and the mouthpiece 661 of the people whom they represent both in their official capacity and as heads of kinship and local groups. Again we may call the chief a symbol of the collective identity of the village community, in the sense that, through his orders, he expresses its collective will and interests. Yet the degree of perfection which this political system, with its well-planned harmonious co-operation between chief and elders, attains in practice varies considerably. Autocratically inclined chiefs find means to evade the check on their power which an efficient council of elders implies. We have spoken of certain chiefs who appointed their friends and favourites to the position of titled elders in disregard of more legitimate claims, thus creating for themselves a personal following in the village council. I was told of chiefs who in the past have overridden the authority of the elders, levying tribute and refusing legitimate grants of land, until the elders appealed to the overlord of the country, the *Etsu* Nupe, against their overbearing ruler. If they failed to obtain the support of the king, my informants added, they would carry on as if there were no chief—go on strike, as it were. I have myself witnessed all variations possible in this fight for balance of power: an autocratic chief who

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seemed to have managed perfectly to turn his elders into mere puppets; a chief (the chief of Doko) whose overbearing behaviour caused a *tunga* group to refuse him the customary 'tithe' of fish caught in a pond on their territory; and also a chief who had tried, in the appointment of a rank-holder, to go against the majority of his council, but was brought to heel by the organized 'strike' of the elders: this happened in Kutigi, where, during the great Mohammedan festivals, the elders declined to attend the traditional ceremonial gathering in the chief's house until he gave in rather than prolong this assault on his prestige. That this religious 'strike' concerns a Mohammedan ceremony is incidental. Refusal to co-operate in established ceremonial activities may well check a chief's high-handedness (though I have not seen another case of this kind): the congregation is as indispensable as the 'owner' of a special magic and the chief organizer and 'financier' of communal rites.

Into the problem of political balance enters yet another factor—the economic aspect of chieftainship. The ability of the chief to free himself from all checks on his authority may depend ultimately on the economic resources of which he can avail himself—of the economic resources, that is, allowed him by the village constitution. (We may leave out of account for a moment the existence of the supreme control of village chieftainship by the overlord of the country.) Having to appoint the heads of family groups to the position of village elders, the chief cannot eliminate completely these agents of 'public opinion'. But decisive economic superiority may spell political power uncontrolled—the ability to win over, bribe, or force opponents into submission.

The political power of the chief is sustained by a number of important economic privileges. First, the chief receives (or rather used to receive) a land-tax in kind, known by the Arabic-Hausa name *dzankd*, 'tithe', from every family head. He also receives a certain gift in kind, or sometimes money, when allotting land to new tenants. The nature of this payment as a gift and not as a regular tax is expressed in the rule that on its receipt the chief has to make the usual small return gift with which the Nupe always dismiss a bearer of presents. A special right to fruit-bearing trees assigns to the chief a source of income not available to other members of the community. The communal farm-work, *egbe*, which the Nupe farmers carry out for one another is always performed first, and on the largest scale, on the chief's farms, so that he can count regularly on a larger and more docile team of workers than any other citizen of the village. Finally, the chief has special rights to the fish caught in the ponds or backwaters in his territory, and to certain game killed by the hunters of his village. As regards the former, he again claims *dzankd*, tithe, of every catch; hunters have to surrender to him the skins of leopards or lions, or meat of leopard and lion, or one leg of a buffalo—here the rules vary locally.

Some of these prerogatives have disappeared to-day. The general money tax of the Emirate has replaced the former land fees and tithes. Besides, the chiefs of larger places, official Village Heads under the N.A., receive a fixed salary. Only in a few small villages the annual gift in kind has survived, though reduced in amount and only in the nature of a

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chief's special income did not, normally, constitute an insurmountable economic barrier between himself and his subjects. This is further shown by the fact that the characteristic possessions of a chief—possession of things generally valued in the society—were not unattainable by others.

His surplus income the chief uses as follows: some of it he must devote to special expenditure attached to his office, the purchase of a goat or fowl for the annual sacrifices, or some other large contribution (larger than that of the other family heads) towards the cost of the village ceremonies. Occasional liberal presents to the elders, food, kola-nuts, beer, gowns are also indicated; a niggardly chief is much disliked. The larger part of his income the chief spends on himself, his family, and generally on things the possession of which are demanded by his status and prestige. Some chiefs, with a view to profit as well as prestige, have bought slaves or taken pawns. Every bigger chief possesses at least one horse. His dress is always of the more expensive kind—embroidered trousers, a turban, and an indigo-dyed gown, possibly an embroidered Bida robe. Many chiefs possess the beautifully carved staffs which are made by the craftsmen in the river valley and sold for sums up to two pounds. One or another chief owns an old flintlock gun, and some chiefs pride themselves on building bigger and more ornate houses than the majority of the people possess. Finally, as the most conspicuous symbol of economic advantage in this country of extremely high bride-price, two at least of the bigger chiefs I met had what among the Nupe peasants is considered a very large number of wives (5 or 6 as against the usual 1 or 2), and so had some of their sons and younger brothers.

Set against this the economic position of a well-to-do family head and rank-holder. He too used to own slaves or pawns. The higher rank-holders often possess large, imposing houses. They carry carved staffs, own a horse, turban and state gown, and a gun. Some of them may have three or four wives. With regard to the accoutrements of his office—the religious elements linked with chieftainship, its insignia and symbols of rank—the chief stands on a plane by himself; as regards things 'that money can buy', or liquid capital, he is placed only one step higher than his citizens of rank. The surplus capital which he derives from his office is not, as we can see, large enough to be turned into an effective instrument of political ambition.

Involved in this is the question how far the temporary economic benefits linked with the chief's office can be used so as to be turned into a lasting economic advantage, enjoyed by the descendants and the whole family of the chief. For the communities in which succession to chieftainship follows promotion or rotation the question answers itself: the surplus income vested in the chief's office is not sufficient, once acquired, to endow his whole 'house' permanently with economic superiority.[1] In

presided over by the *sãsa* ranks, and the smaller family groups (approximately 100 in number) with which we should have to reckon to-day.

[1] Here is a significant illustration: in Mokwa and Jebba, two villages of 'promotion type', the imposing houses of the late chiefs have fallen into disrepair; the descendants are no longer able to command the communal labour without which the upkeep of the large house is impossible.

633 648 between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

634 The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rani*, that of Kupa *Makun*, of Kakanda *Agansha*, and of Shaku *Kpotuy*.[21]

Village Organization

621 Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*Etsu*) who "owns" the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeji*, "father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* ("money," i.e., tax, "chief") as opposed to *Etsu*, "town chief." In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

622 The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

623 The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*gusaki*, sing. *gusa*, the "old ones," or *ticiki*, the "titled ones") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

624 In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*Eigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Zitsu* and *Eigi*, "town chief" and "town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary "king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1918; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1936) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as 'a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

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623 The full council of elders is summoned only on important occasions. The normal routine of village government is carried on by an inner council, consisting of two or three elders of the highest rank who meet informally at the village head's house.

Succession to the highest titles may, like the headship, be either hereditary or by promotion; but succession to the lower titles is nearly always hereditary.[34]

The Political System of the Kyedye

684 184 The government of the Kyedye sub-tribe is centralized from Muregi and is the monopoly of a selected and privileged body consisting of the Kyedye chief (*Kuta*, also called *Etsu Nya Nswa*, "the king of the water") and his titled councillors. The *Kuta* has always been subordinate to the *Etsu* Nupe, but, although the district is now administered centrally from Bida in the same way as other districts in the Emirate, no attempt has ever been made to displace the hereditary rulers.

The office of *Kuta* is hereditary in two of the three chiefly lineages, these two being the "founders" and claiming a common ancestor. The rules of succession are not rigid, however, since the wishes of the *Etsu* Nupe, the title-holders, and the people, and administrative ability are also considered. The *Kuta* appears in public with impressive ceremonial and travels in a state canoe which must never be entered by a woman and must never touch the bank. His authority derives from the tradition that the first *Kuta* was invested by Tsoede, his strong economic position, and the fact that most of the important political offices are allotted to his kinsmen. The heir-apparent is known as the *Egba*; the post is held by the most senior of the *Kuta*'s relatives.

The offices of state fall into two categories: first the *ticiki*, title-holders and councillors, with five offices, four of them hereditary; second the *egbaki*, who are delegates in charge of settlements and colonies. There are many grades of *egbaki*, following a strict system of precedence and promotion. Succession in most cases is not automatic but goes to the most suitable candidate of sufficient seniority. In the early days, three title-holders acted as the *Kuta*'s district heads. Each was allotted a section of the river and was formerly allowed to levy tolls on river traffic. To-day these title-holders have no executive power, though they are still accorded respect, and village heads deal directly through the *Kuta*. There are also "household" titles, mainly in Muregi town, bestowed by the *Kuta* upon his followers.

The *Kuta* had at one time a council of state with advisors, though in effect he was an absolute ruler responsible only to the *Etsu* Nupe. In 1945 a district council was formed, consisting of the *Kuta*, *Alkalin* Muregi, village head Muregi, *Tsado Kuta*, *Liman Kuta*, district scribe, and Muregi school mallam. Meetings are not held regularly, but only when matters of importance need to be discussed.[35]

Organization of Kutigi town (Beni sub-tribe)

633 Kutigi town comprises four originally independent groups: the *Kintsóki*, "owners of the country," the original inhabitants under their head (*Eitsu*) who was formerly town chief; the *Ndaceki* (hunters), aboriginal Nupe but from another village; the *Kónu* (prisoners of war), freed slaves of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, occupied in weaving and indigo-dyeing; *Benú*, the largest group, providing the tribal name, but of alien origin, having arrived in the country from Bornu about 1800. The *Benú* gained political supremacy over the other sections and became the recognized rulers of Kutigi and the neighbouring villages. They are Moslems, wealthy traders and owners of horses and cattle.[36]

[34] Nadel, 1942, pp. 50–8.
[35] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24–5; 1940a, pp. 176–81; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[36] Nadel, 1936.